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12 November 1963

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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12 November 1963

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

C O N T E N T S

1. South Vietnam: New regime turns to implementation of its reformist program. (Page 1)
2. Britain - British Guiana: Labor Party to challenge government's Guianese policy. (Page 3)
3. Saudi Arabia - Yemen: Crown Prince Faysal probably will refuse to renew mandate of UN's Yemen mission. (Page 4)
4. Egypt: US Senate move to restrict aid stirs strong reaction. (Page 5)
5. Turkey: More direct military involvement in government may be in prospect. (Page 6)

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

12 November 1963

DAILY BRIEF

*South Vietnam: (The new regime is turning to the task of implementing its avowed reformist program although there are still signs of groping.)

(The government intends to step up the war effort not only militarily but also on the basis of social justice, according to Foreign Minister Pham Dang Lam.)

(Talking with Ambassador Lodge, Lam stressed the need for lessening the burden of forced labor among the peasants, and for consolidating and improving the strategic hamlets. He appealed for continued US advice and support, noting that the new ministers were "still feeling their way.")

(Lam said the real problem is to insure that government policies are properly implemented at the lower echelons. He approved the recent warnings issued by the government against arbitrary arrests by unauthorized officials. In the countryside widespread personnel changes are underway and several province chiefs already have been replaced.)

(Non-governmental civilian leaders, meanwhile, are watching developments closely, and reserving judgment on the new regime. Bonze Tri Quang, leading Buddhist critic of the Diem regime who left the sanctuary of the US Embassy following the coup, told an American official on 9 November that "the Buddhist movement" had not yet decided whether the new government was good or bad.)

(Tri Quang speculated that some members of the present ruling group may have joined the coup plot more from fear that Diem and Nhu were alienating)

(the US rather than from personal conviction that the old regime was basically wrong. Labor leader Tran Quoc Buu, who was temporarily detained last week, has also expressed some misgivings and regards Premier Tho as a weakling and an opportunist.)

(Similar reserve is also apparent on the part of Vietnamese political leaders who are beginning to resume organizational activity after release from detention or return from exile abroad. Pham Huy Quat, a leading anti-Diem opposition leader, is quoted as saying, after his release from prison last week, that he would proceed slowly in his political efforts until the legal framework for such activity became clear.)

(The Security Ministry in Saigon announced on 9 November that prior authorization must be obtained for all meetings, gatherings, or demonstrations to prevent the Viet Cong from infiltrating the nation's ranks to create dissension.)

(No significant military action was reported over the weekend, although Viet Cong harassing attacks generally continue at a high level.)

25X1

Britain - British Guiana: (The British Labor Party is opposed to the government's decision to hold new elections in British Guiana under a system which provides for proportional representation before taking any further steps to give the colony its independence.)

(The US Embassy has been told that Labor Party chief Harold Wilson will now try to force a parliamentary debate on this issue after Parliament reconvenes on 12 November. The Labor Party will argue that the government's plan is a none-too-clever device designed to oust Prime Minister Jagan which will only accentuate racialism and promote political instability.)

(The Labor Party favors a solution based on strengthening existing constitutional safeguards against majority abuses. It also suggests the establishment of some sort of commonwealth commission as a final court of appeal.)

25X1

12 Nov 63

DAILY BRIEF

3

Saudi Arabia - Yemen: (Ambassador Hart believes that Crown Prince Faysal will not agree to a renewal of the UN Mission in Yemen (UNYOM) when its mandate expires on 4 January.)

(Hart is certain that Nasir's "pledge" to withdraw 5,000 additional troops from Yemen by the end of 1963 will not satisfy Faysal)

25X1

25X1

(General Gyani, the head of UNYOM, agrees that Faysal will not consent to a renewal. He feels that only a Yemeni political settlement can expedite larger troop withdrawals.)

25X1

25X1

12 Nov 63

DAILY BRIEF

4

(Egypt: President Nasir and other influential Egyptian officials have reacted strongly to the Senate amendment to the foreign aid bill which threatens to disqualify Egypt from further US assistance.)

(Ambassador Badeau feels that US relations with Egypt are now in for "some very rough sledding." He reports, for example, that Nasir is said to have talked of nothing else but the amendment when he met with West Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt on 8 November.)

(On 27 October Nasir told Badeau that, while he was grateful for US aid, Egypt had consistently considered alternatives, even at the expense of Egypt's development, should aid be cut back.)

(Egyptian news media have taken the line that Israel is behind the Senate action. One influential newspaper has suggested that all Middle Eastern oil be nationalized.)

25X1

12 Nov 63

DAILY BRIEF

5

Turkey: The antipathy of military leaders toward the increasingly popular opposition Justice Party may soon lead to more direct military involvement in the government.

Military representatives in the senate recently suffered a humiliating setback when a representative of the Justice Party--composed mainly of supporters of the old Menderes regime--was elected president of that body. In view of President Gursel's worsening health, military leaders are concerned that the new senate president will one day become the Acting President of Turkey as provided by the constitution.

This concern will grow if, as seems likely, the Justice Party emerges from the local elections scheduled for 17 November as the country's majority party. Some observers are predicting that the party may win as much as 60 percent of the popular vote.

Another potential problem for the military is the prospect that Premier Inonu, whose political position is unsteady, may soon have to turn to the JP for political support. This is because the second largest party in his three-party coalition is threatening to pull out soon after the forthcoming elections.

25X1

12 Nov 63

DAILY BRIEF

6

25X1

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